The Classic Collector

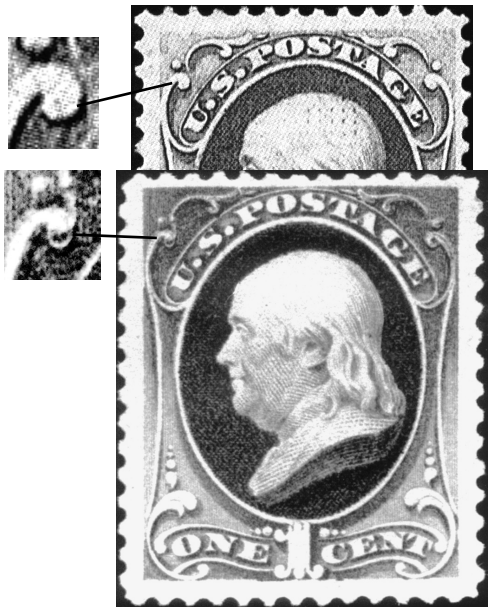
The Re-Engraved Issue of 1881-1882

Officials of the American Bank Note Company decided that certain plates being used at the time were not giving good enough impressions. In 1881 they decided to retouch the dies of the 1¢, 3¢, 6¢, and 10¢ denominations and re-engrave certain portions of the dies as well. Work was done on duplicate dies and not on the original 1870 dies.

The One Cent Stamp
Scott 206

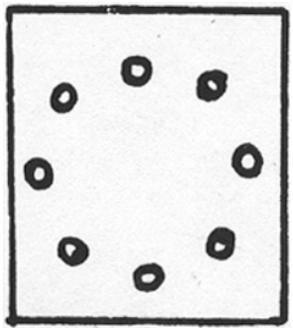
The ''re-engraved" One Cent stamp made its debut in August, 1881. The vertical lines outside of the medallion were deepened so much that they appear quite solid and the background around the portrait is noticeably darkened.

In the illustration below we see the Re-Engraved stamp



superimposed over a previous issue (the National with Grill, Scott 134). Note how much darker and filled in the background appears at the top of the re-engraved stamp.

Check, as well, the foliate ornaments at the top corners of the re-engraved stamp. In the ball (arrow) which forms a portion of these ornaments, there is a small curve of color and certain shadowing lines are found in the other portions of the ornament that are not found on the preceding National, Continental or American issues.



It was on this stamp that the "Douglas Patent" was first used. This consisted of a stamp composed of two layers of paper. The upper layer was very thin and was punched with eight small holes which formed a circle.

To prevent their being cleaned and reused, the stamps were printed on the thin surface paper and through the holes onto the backing paper. 10,000 each of this stamp and the Three Cents Green "Re-Engraved" were ordered by the Post Office Department from The American Bank Note Company with the "Douglas Patent".

These experimental stamps were put on sale at Washington, D.C. They are very scarce today despite the fact that many were bought by professional philatelists of the day. Many collectors have never seen a copy, let alone heard of it.

The One Cent "Re-Engraved" was printed by 34 plates to the tune of over 3.3 billion stamps. It was issued in August 1881, with the earliest documented use being November 2, 1881. Shades include gray blue, bright ultramarine, ultramarine, dull blue, and slate blue. Collectible varieties include a double transfer, and the "Douglas Patent".

Cancellation varieties include "Paid", "Paid All", Numeral, Precancelled "G", Railroad, Supplementary Mail Type F, China, and Printed Precancellation 'Glen Allen, VA' Star.

Cancellation colors, in ascending order of scarcity and value, are black, blue, purple, red, magenta, orange, and green.

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